Matching Comprehension Strategy Instruction to Text

On page xii, we have included a chart that correlates articles with specific strategies and *Toolkit* lessons. Every article requires readers to ***Monitor Comprehension***. Monitoring comprehension is a thinking disposition. We monitor understanding and leave tracks of our thinking in everything we read. We simply can't make sense of any text if we don't keep track of our thinking as we go. Some texts, however, require readers to use a particular strategy above others to make meaning. So the chart reflects our suggestions for matching articles with specific strategies. And for those of you who are using *The Comprehension Toolkit*, the chart offers links to *Toolkit* lessons that dovetail nicely with certain articles. But above all, remember to trust you own judgment about the instruction your kids need and the articles that best serve those purposes.

If you decide you'd like to match more articles with a specific strategy to provide extra instruction or practice, that is easy to do. Here are some tips to help you narrow down your choices.

Activate and Connect to Background Knowledge

When you are trying to match the articles in this volume to the *activate and connect* strategy, we suggest you choose a topic about which kids are likely to have sufficient background knowledge. Familiar topics such as pets, sports, and music are included in this volume. After kids have been taught to connect the new to the known, they are more likely to activate their background knowledge to understand text that is less familiar.

Ask Questions

If you are looking for articles that encourage kids to *ask questions*, you might choose text that is a little less familiar and nudges kids to wonder. Students ask questions to learn content and gain information. We also encourage kids to ask questions to clarify confusion and read to discover answers.

Infer and Visualize

When you want kids to *draw inferences*, consider choosing text that has some ambiguity, where all the information is not explicitly stated. The reader's task, then, is to combine background knowledge with text clues to fill in the gaps and draw a conclusion about the information. Articles with prominent text and visual features support readers as they infer to understand information. When you want readers to *visualize* as they read, choose text where the writer shows rather than merely tells the ideas. When writers paint pictures with words, readers are more likely to visualize.

Determine Importance

It is hard to find a nonfiction text where *determining importance* is not a handy thing to do. But if you want your kids to practice this strategy explicitly, look for text that is packed with details so that readers have to sift out the most important information. Also, find text that is organized around sections with subheads, so kids can find the important information more readily.

Summarize and Synthesize

If you are searching for articles to teach your kids to *summarize and synthesize* information, many in this volume work. In truth, readers need to summarize and synthesize everything they read. However, when specifically teaching kids to summarize and synthesize, encourage them to tackle dense text with a lot of information. Articles that are packed with information require readers to get the gist, put the information into the own words, and sift out the bigger, more important ideas from a sea of facts.

All the articles in this collection were chosen for their versatility, and each one can be used to help kids learn or practice several comprehension strategies. But sometimes, certain strategies are more effective than others for digging out meaning. The correlation chart on the next page shows you which articles match best with particular strategies, and points you to a specific lesson in our *Comprehension Toolkit* where you can see how we have taught that kind of thinking. Here's a list of the lessons from the *Toolkit*. (Harvey and Goudvis, 2004)

The Comprehension Toolkit Language and Lessons for Active Literacy

STRATEGY AND LESSON LIST

Cluster 1: Monitor Comprehension

1 Follow Your Inner Conversation
Listen to the voice in your head and leave tracks of your thinking

2 Notice When You Lose Your Way
Monitor your inner voice to focus your thinking

3 Read, Write, and Talk
Think your way through the text

Cluster 2: Activate and Connect

4 Follow the Text Signposts
Use nonfiction features to guide learning

5 Merge Your Thinking with New Learning
Read and think about new information

6 Connect the New to the Known
Activate and build background knowledge

Cluster 3: Ask Questions

7 Question the Text
Learn to ask questions as you read

8 Read to Discover Answers
Ask questions to gain information

9 Ask Questions to Expand Thinking
Wonder about the text to understand big ideas

Cluster 4: Infer and Visualize

10 Infer the Meaning of Unfamiliar Words
Use context clues to unpack vocabulary

11 Infer With Text Clues
Draw conclusions from text evidence

12 Tackle the Meaning of Language
Infer beyond the literal meaning

13 Crack Open Features
Infer the meaning of subheads and titles

14 Read With a Question in Mind
Infer to answer your questions

15 Wrap Your Mind Around the Big Ideas
Use text evidence to infer themes

Cluster 5: Determine Importance

16 Spotlight New Thinking
Learn to use a Fact/Question/Response chart

17 Record Important Ideas
Create an FQR with historical fiction

18 Target Key Information
Code the text to hold thinking

19 Determine What to Remember
Separate interesting details from important ideas

20 Distinguish Your Thinking From the Author's
Contrast what you think with the author's perspective

21 Construct Main Ideas From Supporting Details
Create a Topic/Detail/Response chart

Cluster 6: Summarize and Synthesize

22 Read, Think, and React
Paraphrase and respond to information

23 Think Beyond the Text
Move from facts to ideas

24 Read to Get the Gist
Synthesize your thinking as you go

25 Reread and Rethink
Rethink misconceptions and tie opinions to the text

26 Read, Write, and Reflect
Create a summary response to extend thinking